2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[The Dance of NoaKxnim]

773 824 825 approaches the Bella Coola River, and proceeds up it, beneath the surface of the water, invisible to all. Its destination is *Smaiex-a*, whence its captain leaps to *Nasqalxnaista* to await the coming of *Alqustēm*. The crew consists of a number of supernatural beings, who will be described in connection with the ceremonial on the night of *nalaxam*. This canoe, which brings the salmon and berries to Bella Coola, has four masts but no sails, and is enormous. Whenever the weather is fine, *Nēlkynam* lowers first one side and then the other of his craft so that the salmon may leave; after swimming around for a time they always return, refreshed by their exercise. In former [785] times when people were purified by ceremonial chastity, sev- [831] eral succeeded in seeing the craft, and from them it is known [787] that it is about six hundred yards in length, that it travels without leaving a wake, that any canoes passing near are sucked along after it, and that a mallard duck, perched on the bow, quacks continuously. Intelligent informants agreed that the bringing of the salmon during the autumn was inconsistent, but they could offer no explanation. One man believed that this was pointed out not many years ago by a man whose [620] patron was *Nēlkynam*, but that the marshals requested him [776] not to upset established ritual by too much logic. *Nēlkynam* is patron for several *kukuxsta*, who are believed by the uninitiated [575] to be able to see his canoe. As he passes up the river [796] the *kusiut* dances begin.

[184] It is unnecessary to describe the full ritual in each village, [424] as this is supposed to be identical, and probably contains only [551] slight variations, if any. In *Tsmoōt* the *kusiut* who has the prerogative of seeing *Nēlkynam* is a certain *Qaxelān-i*,[a] in Kimsquit, *Alxaklwaxam*,[b] and in *Skkiatl*, *Xemtsim*. Although,

[115] [426] [578] [a] Details of this dance were learnt from the father of *Qaxelān-i*, who intimated that the name was a family possession. Several months later an old woman referred to the handing of this designation by her father and said that the present user had failed to return it. Bitter feelings are often caused by disputes of this kind.

[b] Meaning "Cloud Covered," a reference to the invisibility of his person, as if the latter were hidden by clouds. Many *kusiut* names have significances of this type.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEó Bellacoola NEó

775 782 small particles of food on a fire; these become large when they reach the land below and nourish the ghosts. An individual making an offering of this kind says:

"*Anukâldimut kuiso*," "This is to make straight your road, beloved one."

[756] The needs and desires of ghosts have been made known to mortals through visits paid by shamans to the land below, and by the coming of ghosts to this world. It is, therefore, realized that food placed on the ground does not reach the [372] land below, but that morsels thrown on a fire sink through into the abode of ghosts. Offerings to the dead are not made [753] with the hope of receiving favours from them, but rather to provide beloved relatives with necessary food and to prevent them from showing displeasure by causing stomach-aches and other ailments.

782 Other instances, both of prayer and of sacrifice, will be recorded in connection with various myths. The salient feature is that the Bella Coola are able to gain, by such means, the favour of supernatural beings, a factor which plays an important part in their daily life. In addition, they have a [789] large number of practices based on sympathetic magic. No absolutely rigid boundary line can be drawn between the latter and religion proper, but there is a fairly clear division between rites such as those just described, in which propitiation is the important element, and others in which the desired end follows the mere performance of a certain act. Customs of this last type will be reserved for later consideration (vol. I, chap. xi).

THE OBSERVANCE OF CEREMONIAL CHASTITY

●831 785 In addition to prayer and sacrifice, the Bella Coola have yet another means of obtaining the goodwill of supernatural beings, and at the same time of strengthening their own supernatural attributes so that good fortune is likely to occur. This is by the practice of *xextsis*, ceremonial chastity, of which the basis is that a man must not hold intercourse except after certain periods of continence. To understand this, it is neces-

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)/948
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sary to understand the attitude of the Bella Coola to the sexual act itself. Although it is a normal part of life (for no one would voluntarily abstain from all contact) yet the union of man and woman does not lack import, since its very humanness distinguishes those who practise it in the eyes of supernatural beings, both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic. Those who indulge excessively become so over-charged with this characteristic that their undertakings are certain to fail, whereas those who remain continent for a considerable period are so freed from the contagion of mankind that they become almost supernatural themselves and always succeed in their ventures. If, after a period of restraint, a man holds intercourse, this essentially human act adds typical human strength to that accumulated by chastity. Chastity alone gives power; but chastity consummated by intercourse at the proper period increases that power enormously. This somewhat complicated belief is accepted without question by every Bella Coola, playing an important part in their lives, even in their present degraded condition. The following story illustrates the point rather clearly:

A party of Kingcome Inlet people had been present at a ceremonial at Smith Inlet. While returning home, one canoe, containing a chief, his wife, and eighteen or twenty commoners, was caught by an unexpected south wind and driven on the rocky islet, *Iwa-akkdtq*, where the lightbouse now stands. The occupants managed to reach shore and to save their canoe. The islet was barren, but they made a rude shelter of boughs in which they lived while the storm continued. Every day the chief sent out the young men to hunt seals, and every day they returned empty-handed. The little food they had with them on landing was now exhausted and they were starving. One night, when they were almost famished, the chief said to his wife:

"The youths have done their best. Now that death is before us I want to create a kindly feeling. I am going out, probably to die during the night, and I want you to allow each young man to sleep with you. It is a strange request but our condition is unusual, and the story of your shame will never be known, because we shall soon all be dead."

The wife acquiesced. The chief then told one of the young commoners to lie with her, and afterwards to tell a comrade to do likewise,

McIlwraith E-9 (1922-1924) 1948
NEB Bellacoola NEB

who, in turn, would pass on the request so that it might reach each member of the party. Not only is it customary to custom for a commoner to hold intercourse with a chief's wife, but it is unknown for a man to ask another to sleep with his wife, so the youth was surprised and rather frightened. However, he acceded to the request, passed on the instructions, and washed. As he was bathing, a seal appeared in the surf beside him, and he was able to kill it easily. Each in turn behaved in the same manner, washed, and then killed a seal. Next morning, when the chief returned he was delighted that all had turned out in accordance with his hopes. At the same time the wind dropped so that the party was able to return home.

The power which had brought the seals within reach of the men had been engendered in their own bodies by these ritual acts after a rather lengthy period of continence. The Bella Coola believe that such a procedure always increases their strength and ability, therefore giving them a better chance to gain favour from supernatural beings, and to take advantage of opportunities offered. Hunters in particular are careful with regard to their marital life since animals know their acts and thoughts, and hide from one who has not made himself "clean" by continence, its termination, and bathing. *Sestste* consists of these three elements, but since continence is the most prominent feature, the term may be translated as "ceremonial chastity."

In its simplest form this comprises merely the three elements already mentioned. The longer the continence, the greater the power engendered by its termination. A man who has practised abstinence for a year has such strength within himself that almost any good fortune may occur, and cases are known in which it has been carried out for even longer periods. More often, an individual practises ceremonial chastity in accordance with a family tradition. One old man gave the following recipe and was most emphatic that it always brought success in hunting and fishing; he added that on the two occasions he had tried it, he had brought back a phenomenal number of skins.

A person planning to set out on an expedition for any pur-

[illegible] 2:1 (1922-1924) 1948
BBE Bellacoola BBE

224 cide, selecting small twigs from which the bark and spines
785 have been rubbed off. This acts as an emetic, so that before
[824 washing in the morning he has vomited from his stomach all
278 polluting matter, especially any human hair which animals
[785 consider particularly unclean. Before dawn he goes to the river and remains beneath the surface as long as possible, irrespective of the coldness of the water. Then he returns slowly to his house. Four nights later the same acts are repeated. These eight nights of continence are followed by two further periods, each of four nights, making a total of sixteen. Thus fortified, a hunter anticipates great success.

785 A person practising ceremonial chastity is in a condition peculiarly susceptible to disaster, and must observe certain restrictions. If, for example, anyone sees him as he returns from washing in the morning, the power which he has been accumulating so laboriously is lost. Owing to this belief, it is customary for a man to wash long before dawn and to come creeping into his house through a hole in the floor. He must always be the last to retire at night, the first to rise in the morning; and he must say nothing about what he is doing. Intercourse is, of course, absolutely forbidden except on the proper nights, and at other times he must not even put his arm around his wife.
[837 Failure to obey these restrictions destroys any advantage from ceremonial chastity, while actual disaster follows should a man's wife misconduct herself with anyone else when he is using her for this purpose. If she is unfaithful, her husband is certain to be slain by an animal when hunting, or to slip and be killed on a mountain trail. Animals know all that human beings do or think, and they punish anyone who is unable to perform
[825 ceremonial chastity fittingly. Behind these restrictions there
• 831 is undoubtedly the sentiment that intercourse, held duly and
785 properly at the right time, is not a mere desire of the flesh, but a ceremonial act. Indeed, when the Bella Coola speak of it in
[833 connection with ceremonial chastity, they do not use the
[195 common term, *c-m*, which has a coarse implication, but *xoldjut* which has a polite and almost sacred implication.

Ceremonial chastity is considered almost a necessity to hunters, and in former years a man would rarely, if ever, set out to seek game without fortifying himself by at least several days of continence followed by washing. In the few cases known of a female assuming the clothing and activities of a male, she has been forced to hire a man to sleep with her on the proper nights before starting to hunt. But hunters are by no means the only men to observe ceremonial chastity. If a man wants to build a salmon-weir, it is by this means that he makes himself strong enough to succeed; if he plays cards, good fortune is sought in the same fashion. The guests of a potlatch observe ceremonial chastity so that their host may not forget them in his distribution of presents, the host, that his guests may arrive on time. The *hesiut* dancer thus fortifies himself for the performance of a dangerous ritual. In this way a man experiences dreams foretelling the future. In every desire or activity of life, ceremonial chastity is a potent means of success, not infallible, usually combined with prayer and in many cases with sacrifice, but a background and accompaniment to every means of propitiation. If a man has conspicuous ill-luck, it is because he has failed to observe ceremonial chastity; if he succeeds, it is because he has done so. At the present time there is living in the Bella Coola valley an old white man who for years has ranged the mountains in search of gold; he has been unsuccessful, and the Bella Coola believe that he will never succeed until he observes ceremonial chastity.

The strength which a man may acquire through the practice of this rite is almost limitless. A man may be ailing on account of the leaning of his tally post, but, if he energetically and faithfully observes chastity, it will become straightened, whether automatically or through the agency of *Alquntám* is uncertain. After the termination of a long period of continence, a man's spirit is so strong that his friends place their hands on the back of his neck in order to absorb some of the power radiating from his spirit. Ancient myths record how the more force engendered in a man's body by lengthy abstin-

U-Mb Dewolfe E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

once was enough to kill an enemy, as if his spirit had been driven from his body by a sudden start. Even in recent times it is said that individuals who have observed ceremonial chastity have been able to perform miraculous feats. A few years ago a Bella Bella man lost two sons and was trying to get enough money to buy a tombstone for them. With this in view, he observed chastity for almost a year. Then he went seal hunting, and had killed a large number of the animals when, standing up in his boat, the sail blew against him so that he was thrown overboard. But he was so strong that he simply walked on the surface of the water and re-entered his boat, none the worse for his mishap. The men who cited this instance stated that a number of Bella Bella had seen the occurrence and could vouch for it.

Ceremonial chastity is not a matter about which the Bella Coola are willing to talk. It concerns both their religious and family life, in neither of which are strangers welcome. But when an investigator becomes on friendly terms, and gains some understanding of the inner lives of the people, he begins to realize its importance. Ceremonial chastity is not only potent in itself, but it is also the favourite means by which a man can cleanse himself of the impurities of human existence so that he finds favour with the supernatural.

U.BC Geography E-1 (1922-1924)/1948
NBS Bellacoola NBS

blankets" for the child. The advantages to the donors were that they had an opportunity of showing their dignity, and it would always be a mark of pride for the child to be able to boast of the way in which she had been "held." 556 628 858

Ceremonial marriage clearly demonstrates two strong Bella Coola characteristics; namely, the desire publicly to enter into financial undertakings to demonstrate the wealth of the contracting party, and the desire to increase the prestige of children by means of this wealth expended indirectly on their behalf.

EXTRA-MARITAL RELATIONS

Although the Bella Coola do not regard marriage primarily as a means of regulating relations between the sexes, yet the connection between the two is sufficiently close to warrant description in this chapter. A man considers intercourse as one of the normal phenomena of life: by marrying he has exclusive rights to his wife, but few moral restraints deter him from anyone else to whom he can gain access without infringing the prerogatives of some other husband. Moreover, sexual intercourse is not regarded solely as a gratification of desires; it has a significance which can be described, not inaptly, as holy. As already explained, two favourite methods of obtaining success in any undertaking are by preserving lengthy continence or by observing ceremonial chastity. If a young unmarried man or widower should wish to make use of this latter means, he is compelled to have relations with a woman to whom he has no just claims. This is universally recognized, nor is there the slightest odium attached to the man. The only essential is that he neither violate another's wife, nor force a young girl against her will. 581 831 897

At the present time there is great laxity in Bella Coola, a condition which makes it difficult to judge the state of affairs in former times. Every effort was made to obtain satisfactory evidence, and the following was verified and re-verified with the older men. [128]

A wife, properly married with full ceremony, was usually 837 839

[The Ghost Dance]

X's, where he is assisted by the four times repeated frenzied beating of sticks and his call returned whence it came.

During the rest of the ceremonial season X becomes mad at intervals and displays his insanity by rushing to every house and throwing dirt and sand. His *kukwiac* escort is always with him, and the procedure is identical with that already recorded. X makes no recompense for the damage inflicted, so it is probable that his fellows do not regard his dance as an unmitigated pleasure, but nothing can be done to deter him from exercising his prerogative.

THE DANCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL CHARMER

Although the Bella Coola are probably as moral as members of any other tribe, they enjoy humour of an obscene nature, and a dance which never fails to provide entertainment is that of the Supernatural Charmer. The patron of this is *Saimaximdi*, a beautiful, unmarried, feminine being who is also termed *Alkpaia'i* and *Nuxalkmâlaic*. She is thought to disregard the efforts of her supernatural relatives to restrain her, and comes to this earth where she bestows her favours not only on human beings, but on animals. Her protégé at Kimsquit is a young man, *Lâlaiak'*, at Bella Coola, a young woman, *Kwaläkmc*; like all other *kwiat* names these can be used either by men or women. It is said that *Lâlaiak'*'s prerogative is derived from the experience of an ancestor in past ages, whereas that of *Kwaläkmc* was initiated three generations ago by a very powerful chief. The ritual in each case is identical, so the dancer can be referred to as X. Each has the prerogative of singing not only of *Saimaximdi*, but also of the being known as *Wixwinsmaē*. Many masks are required at the *nukumc* of either of these beings, so it is customary for X to perform with respect to *Saimaximdi* one year, and to *Wixwinsmaē* at the next or a subsequent ceremonial season, though the actual songs always refer to both patrons.

When X wishes to dance he consults the marshals, obtains their consent, and then makes final arrangements on, normally,

[The Dance of the Supernatural Chorus]

each wearing the mask of a man and each with the clothing and distinctive marks of a particular tribe: Tsimshian, Haida, Bella Bella, Rivers Inlet, China Hat, Kitimat, Fort Rupert, Smith Inlet, Cowichan, and as many more as X has wished, not forgetting Bella Coola itself. On at least one occasion representations of a white man and of a Chinese were used. Sometimes instead of one, there are two of each tribe. Each figure pretends to be pursuing *Saimassimdt* and keeps up a running fire of complaints:

"She left me for a worthless man; oh! how unhappy I am," says one, and another adds:

"Alas, I enjoyed her only once."

Each uses his own imagination in making comments, frequently drawing on personal experiences with faithless women. *Ano'lkwalasis* explains everything, and the heralds echo the remarks. *Saimassimdt* looks around for a handsome young *Indian* woman and says to her:

"How many men have known you?"

The heralds repeat the question and tell the woman not to be bashful, but to speak the truth. It is considered excessively funny for her to answer a number in the hundreds, even more than the tale of *Saimassimdt's* lovers. This is a time when obscene remarks are allowed and, indeed, expected. A short distance behind the hurrying procession of those who have loved *Saimassimdt* and are still allured by her, comes a supernatural being disguised under the mask of an old man. He is her father, who keeps giving her good advice and begging her to forsake her evil ways, but she pays no attention to him. Finally, just as she is about to leave, there enters an old, old man with white hair and a wrinkled face; he totters in leaning heavily upon a stick and calling to the woman to wait for him. She heeds him not, but goes out of the house while he staggers feebly around the fire, voicing his complaints and his appeals. *Ano'lkwalasis* explains that he is *Simpetus*, who fell under the spell of *Saimassimdt* long ago in his youth, and for whom her beauty had such a fatal attraction that he has followed her

[illegible]

[illegible]

her house while the singers compose a new song. The theme is of her person, the young male being, *K'wat'enal'a*, "The Big One." It describes how he came from above and went far and near over the earth in fruitful pursuit of women, how each victim fell in love with her seducer so that she followed him in all his wanderings, how Loon befriended him, and how he exchanged his libation for a covering of abalone shells.

On *nuxwalilaga* when the *hadzoxsa* or usual go to the house, they bring back not only wood for music but also the trunk of a large cedar tree, at which the carpenters work during the two succeeding days. On *nuxwa* a parade occurs of the supernatural beings similar to that in the dance of the Supernatural Chaperon, but the masked figures represent women, not men, of the different crestal tribes. *K'wat'enal'a* leads the procession and pays no more attention to his mistresses than did *Sisemalaxsemalis* to her would-be lovers. There is the same humor for local remarks, of which *K'wat'enal'a* takes full advantage when he calls the attention of the young men to his following, and asks them how many mistresses each has had.

In the evening the uninitiated are called to X's house where the first object they see is the tree-trunk, converted by the carpenters into an enormous bird. Wooden wings and a loon's head have been provided and the whole is painted in imitation of a loon's plumage. *K'wat'enal'a* is in evidence, wearing a bird disguise. Presently a matting enclosure in one of the rear corners of the house is thrown open, and the uninitiated see the throng of his mistresses who rush forth, almost coming to blows in their eagerness to reach their seducer. *Awithlanalis* stands on one side and explains the significance. After the mock combat has lasted for a few minutes, a Cannibal begins to growl and the uninitiated hurry out. The ceremonial then concludes in the usual manner.

This dance differs from all other *hamats'a* rites in one respect, since the call can come to X several times during a single ceremonial season. Of course there is no compulsion; she uses her own discretion as to whether she dance more than once,

[illegible] Swanton, R. B. (1902-1928) 1928
with Bellacoola MSS

directions. Then the joyful owner was able to draw back her crystal and the sick woman at once recovered.

Another prerogative of the same nature is *kudzila*. As the *kukusiut* are gathering and before the main ceremonial of the evening, the man or woman with this prerogative can display it if he so desires. He stands up, stamps, then bends down and begins to beat with a stick on the floor; the singers, who know what is to take place, quickly join in. This serves to concentrate the performer's power, consisting of the ability to scratch the external genital organs. The sticks continue to sound as the performer moves about the house, acting in accordance with his right, and at the same time rolling his eyes and licking his lips. Choosing either man or woman as he desires, he calls out his name, and the person addressed must come forward to take his hands. The power is thus transmitted and the one so chosen begins to scratch, with the same accompaniment of rolling eyes and licking lips.

"It is sweet," he cries.

The power is then returned to the owner, who later passes it to another victim, until the marshals decide it is time to proceed to the main rites of the evening. The use of this prerogative is a source of never-ending amusement to the *kukusiut*. The only explanation given of this somewhat peculiar ability is that it is practised by the supernatural beings in the land above. Like every other *kusiut* rite, it can be performed only by a person who owns a name in which it is embodied.

Sis'waia, the third of these prerogatives, is to imitate the action of holding sexual intercourse. Like the last, its use is limited to the house in which a dance is taking place, and can be carried out only while the audience is waiting for the main ceremony. The performer, man or woman, stands up with a rope pressed close across his stomach, held with hands clenched at the hips. It is said that in this position nothing can pass behind him. The singers and other *kukusiut* begin to beat time to concentrate the actor's power as he stamps around in a crouching posture, crying *hoip* and shaking his hips. Pre-

A: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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424 sently he begins to grunt, and calls the name of either a man
*575 or a woman. The person so designated must take the per-
*796 former's hands, thus assimilating his power, and in his turn
787 begins to shake and grunt, amid the laughter of all. Presently
the "gift" is returned, and later passed to another recipient.
*891 Sometimes a modest woman shakes her head instead of her
522 hips, to the intense amusement of the audience. After some
[776] time the owner draws his power to himself and the main cere-
mony of the evening proceeds. It is said that the supernatural
beings above perform *sis'mota*.

The Death of a *Kusiut*

*575 A detailed description of *kusiut* dances and ritual has now
766 been given, but certain special features still remain. One of
*796 these is the method of disposal of the body of a dead member
787 of the society. In dances which are completed in four days,
there is little likelihood of the performer's death, but this is
by no means uncommon during the long seclusion of a Can-
nibal for example. In this case there is no wailing, and the
death is concealed from the uninitiated, sometimes even a wife
being kept in ignorance of her husband's decease. A mask
representing the patron of the dead man is hung in the house
behind the fire as a constant reminder of what must be done.
From the ceremonial point of view, the serious aspect lies in
the fact that a call has come which has not been sent back, and
which cannot be sent back by the receiver. The marshals
discuss the matter and agree that it must pass to some *kusiut*,
a near relative of the deceased, who is informed of the decision
and does not dare refuse, even if he should wish to do so. After
a delay of two or three days, the body is taken secretly to the
grave and buried, while the *kukusiut* sing the dead person's
song. This causes the call to shift to the chosen relative who
completes the ceremony in due course. In the case of a
Cannibal, for example, a considerable amount of time is al-
lowed to elapse, and meanwhile the uninitiated are told that
the *kukusiut* are still waiting and watching for his return.

[illegible] Eleventh E-5 (1922-1924) 1968
NEH Bellecroix NEH

Then she sat down to the meal with her husband, the courses being exactly as she had described it to her visitor. After they had finished eating, *Sinaz*'s wife told him of the day's happenings, how a woman, giving her name, had visited the camp and had asked a great many questions about him, including whether or not he observed ceremonial chastity, and other personal matters.

"What did you tell her?" *Sinaz* asked his wife.

"Oh, I answered her truthfully," she replied.

"You should never have done that!" *Sinaz* burst out in anger. "It was none of her business. Don't you know that you should never discuss a hunter's observance of ceremonial chastity? You have behaved very badly."

Sinaz had reason for his wrath, because no wife should ever discuss this matter, as in so doing she weakens or destroys her husband's power.

A few days afterward the evil woman again visited *Sinaz*'s camp, carrying concealed beneath her blanket a wooden club used for killing salmon. *Sinaz*'s wife did not see the approach of her hypocritical friend, who struck her on the head with the weapon and killed her. The murderess dragged her victim's body a short distance from the camp; with her copper knife she removed the skin and drew it over her own body, endeavouring in every way to make it fit. But the wife of *Sinaz* had been larger than the bad woman, who tried to remedy the difference in size by tying the excess in wrinkles around her hips. The greatest difficulty was about the eyes, where the skin hung in folds which the impostor sewed neatly to make less noticeable. When all was done the murderess scraped a hole in the soft ground and buried the body of her victim.

While awaiting the return of *Sinaz* the impostor busied herself in carrying out all the small household occupations, just as she had been told about them. Towards dusk *Sinaz* came back. He noticed that his wife looked peculiar and uneasy, but said nothing about it; they sat down together to the meal but the woman kept her eyes lowered, lest the loose skin about them might betray her. *Sinaz* wondered at that and also at her voice, which did not sound normal. At night the masquerader went first to bed, as a wife always does when her husband is observing ceremonial chastity. *Sinaz* followed shortly. In a few minutes an owl hooted:

"*Sinaz*'s wife has tied up a fold of skin round her hips."

Neither man nor woman spoke. Even at that distant period it was well known that the voice of a dead person passes into an owl, though only rarely can one communicate with the living. It was, in fact, the slain wife speaking from above the spot where her body lay. The murderess feared that *Sinaz* would put his arm around her waist, but she was saved because his observance of ceremonial chastity prevented him from doing so.

Boas Collection B-5 (1922-1924) 1968
MSS Bellacoola MSS

group. The moral code is not concerned with animals. The life of the Bella Coola would be unbearable to most white people, yet they find it far from unpleasant. They sigh at present conditions, but there is much to amuse them notwithstanding. If several people are talking together, one is sure to hear bursts of laughter every few minutes. It takes little to interest them; a story they have heard a hundred times, the troubles of a neighbour with his wife, the eccentricity of a white man, the stupidity of the investigator, any of these is enough to cause a hearty laugh. When collecting information it was constantly necessary to joke with them; the most feeble witticism was enough, but they lost interest in the work unless kept smiling. Their sense of humour is not refined; jests about sexual matters are common and are enjoyed alike by men, women, and children. It is not that their tastes are perverted, but rather that they have no reticence in discussing this topic, so they find it easy to see the ludicrous aspects of a subject which is ever near the surface in their minds. They have no hesitation in poking fun at their friends; a successful practical joke, such as hiding the writer's tobacco, is enough to fill them with amusement. If the victim shows temporary resentment, the glee of his friends is complete, and shrieks of laughter usually terminate the trick.

Unless the white man who comes to live among the Bella Coola is unusually broad-minded, he is at first repelled by the dirt and untidiness prevailing everywhere; even the people themselves seem unnatural. He finds it difficult to realize the sincerity of their religious beliefs, and the manner in which these influence their daily lives is hard to grasp. The potlatch system appears so grotesque that it seems to reflect a psychology diametrically opposed to his own. The force of public opinion on personal conduct is almost incomprehensible. Gradually, however, he begins to understand the reasons underlying Bella Coola life. The potlatch becomes intelligible when regarded as a means of achieving fame; constant attention to supernatural beings is natural considering the firm conviction

524 Insert right hand from distal side into the loop hooked down by right index finger, releasing this finger in the process.

With tips of right thumb and index finger grasp left radial index finger string and left ulnar thumb string, taking care that the grasping fingers pass to the distal side of the (crossing) left ulnar index finger-radial thumb string.

FIG. 6. "A Salmon Trap."

Draw these two strings out to the right, allowing the original right hand loop to slip over them.

This completed figure represents a salmon-trap,[1] the opening pointing towards the left (Figure 6).

II. A WATER HOLE.

Opening A with middle fingers.

Bring middle fingers together, tip to tip; transfer right middle finger loop to left middle finger, and left middle finger loop to right middle finger, passing it over the loop just transferred.

Extend.

Insert left thumb into left middle finger loop from proximal side and transfer this loop to the thumb, keeping it distal to the loop already held.

Insert left thumb into left little finger loop from proximal side and transfer this loop to the thumb, keeping it distal to the two loops already held.

Insert left little finger into left thumb loops from proximal side, passing to radial side of the two proximal ulnar thumb strings, and to ulnar side of distal ulnar thumb string; hook this string down with little finger through thumb loops.

Insert left index finger into left thumb loops from distal side, passing to ulnar side of the two distal radial thumb strings, and to radial side of proximal radial thumb strings; turn index finger up away from manipulator, taking up this string on the dorsal aspect of the tip of the index finger.

Release left thumb.

Release right thumb and little finger.

Extend.

[825] [831] This completed figure (Figure 5) shows the bird ready to dive in search

[1] Some informants state that this figure represents the female genital organs.

524 wrapping radial thumb string around tips of index fingers, and allowing original index finger loops to slip off.

Release thumbs.

There is now a St. Andrew's Cross in the centre of the figure. With each thumb take up the upper arm of the cross nearest to it from the proximal side.

Release index fingers.

Transfer loop hooked down by ring and little fingers of each hand to little fingers of each hand, without altering direction of loop.

FIG. 9. "A Rabbit."

Insert index fingers into little finger loops from distal side, hand them towards manipulator to proximal side of radial little finger strings, ulnar thumb strings, and radial thumb strings; then bend them up and away from manipulator to distal side of radial thumb string, and to proximal side of the straight string which crosses the figure forming a loop between ulnar thumb string and radial little finger string of each hand. Hook this string on index fingers and return, taking it up on the dorsal aspect of index fingers.

Release thumbs.

[525] The loops just released represent the ears of the rabbit. With thumbs press the ears through little finger loops and elevate with middle fingers, thereby making the figure appear more life-like (Figure 9).

VI. THE LONG PENIS OF RAVEN

524 Bella Coola opening.

● 531 Insert middle, ring and little fingers into index finger loops from proximal side and hook down radial index finger strings.

With thumbs take up radial index finger strings from proximal side and return through thumb loops, allowing original thumb loops to slip off.

Insert middle fingers into thumb loops from proximal side and take up on the backs of middle fingers the strings passing across the palmar aspect of thumbs, returning thence to normal position.

With hook of left middle finger grip right middle finger loop and release right middle finger.

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With hook of right middle finger grip left middle finger loop and lift this loop from left middle finger. 524 831

Release thumbs and extend.

Pass thumbs to proximal side of index finger loops into hooked down middle finger loops from distal side and pick up radial middle finger strings.

Release index fingers but do not extend.

The long pendant loops represent the penis. Lift the figure and bend the head so that both loops can be taken into the mouth, where they can be moistened so that they will hang close together.

Gently separate the middle fingers which are hooking down loops; this causes the penis to become erect (Figure 10). It is difficult to prevent the loops from falling apart, as they always do unless well moistened.

FIG. 10. "The Long Penis of Raven."

The two lozenges which appear in the central base of the figure represent Raven's testicles.

This figure is also called, more simply, the penis.

VII. A BUTTERFLY

Position I. 524

With thumbs take up ulnar little finger strings from distal side.

With middle fingers take up palmar strings as in Opening A.

Pass thumbs to proximal side of index finger loops and take up radial little finger string from proximal side.

With little fingers hook down ulnar middle finger strings, allowing original little finger string to slip off.

Pass hooks of ring fingers into loops hooked down by little fingers from proximal side.

With ring fingers hook down proximal ulnar thumb strings, returning through loops hooked down by little fingers.

Release little fingers.

With little fingers hook down the loop hooked down by the ring fingers.

Release ring fingers.

Release middle fingers.

Pass index fingers into thumb loops from distal side, then bend upwards towards manipulator to radial side of proximal radial thumb string and to ulnar side of distal radial thumb string, then bend down and upwards away from manipulator, and keeping to distal side of both ulnar

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524 Two loops now pass around ulnar little finger string, radial little finger string, and ulnar middle finger string of each hand, with the "apex" of each loop at the angle formed by the crossing of radial middle finger string and ulnar thumb string. In each case the open aspect of the loop is parallel to the palmar aspect of the hand. With the mouth, or the help of an assistant, insert a thin stick, about six inches in length, between the right middle and ring fingers from the dorsal aspect of the hand, through the loop nearest the right hand, then through the other loop, and out between the middle and ring fingers of the left hand. The stick should project an equal distance behind the dorsal aspect of each hand.

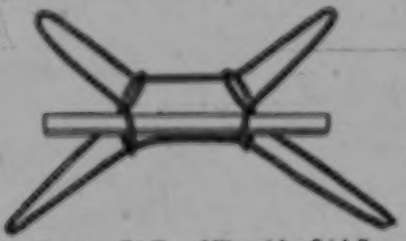

FIG. 13. "A Tug-of-War with a Stick."

Release middle fingers.

Gently extend.

The two loops tighten on the stick (Figure 13), and as the hands are separated the two "bays," that is, the loops extending from the radial thumb string to ulnar little finger string, are seen tugging at the stick. Continue separating the hands, and the winner draws the stick from his opponent's grasp and carries it away either to the right or to the left.

X. A MAN AND A WOMAN

524 831 Form the string into a double loop, so that each string or loop normally single is now double; such a string or loop will be described as single throughout. The figure can be done equally well with a string of half the ordinary length.

Bella Coola opening.

Insert middle, ring, and little fingers into index finger loops from proximal side and hook down radial index finger strings.

Pass left index finger to ulnar side of right ulnar index finger string and hook down right ulnar index finger string.

Release right index finger, but do not draw tight.

Pass right index finger to ulnar side of left ulnar index finger strings and hook down the two left ulnar index finger strings, but do not draw tight.

Each index finger is now hooking down two strings.

Pass index fingers to palmar side of ulnar thumb string, and by bending index fingers outwards, take up this string on the dorsal aspect of each, allowing the two strings hooked down by index fingers to slip off.

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Extend.

Insert middle fingers into index finger loops from proximal side. 524 831

Pass middle fingers to proximal side of radial thumb strings, and index fingers to distal side of radial thumb strings, holding this string between the tips of these fingers; bend index and middle fingers up and away from manipulator, taking up radial thumb strings on dorsal aspect of the tips of index fingers, and allowing the original loops to slip off.

Release middle fingers.

Release thumbs.

This shows a man and a woman standing up, facing one another (Figure 14). By pressing radial ring finger strings, with thumbs, away from manipulator, the figures can be made to come together in an embrace.

FIG. 14. "A Man and a Woman."

XI. *Kwoi-yaix*[1] 524

Bella Coola opening.

*Pass thumbs proximal to index finger loops and take up ulnar index finger string on their backs.

Release index fingers.

Hook down distal ulnar thumb strings with middle, ring, and little fingers.

Pass index fingers into thumb loops from distal side, to radial side of distal ulnar thumb string, and to the ulnar side of proximal ulnar thumb string, thence to distal side of proximal radial thumb string; bend index fingers down and up, away from manipulator, taking up this string on their dorsal aspects.

Release thumbs.

Pass thumbs into the loop hooked down by middle, ring, and little fingers of each hand from the distal side, and transfer this loop to the thumbs.*

Extend with backs of hands towards manipulator.

FIG. 15. "*Kwoi-yaix.*"

[1] This is archaic Bella Coola, the meaning of which has been forgotten.

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[825] *Sulukid:* Mountain on west side of the Kimsquit River.
sunlo-d'xtsus-tsus: One of the river sculpins.
sunkumk: To gather cedar-bark.
Szimsina: One of the first women to settle on the Kimsquit River in the beginning
Sutal: One of the first women to settle at Schooner Pass in the beginning of time.
[101] *Sultuku,* "Winter Trail": Locality, perhaps village, on the upper Kimsquit River.
Sutxkmg: Generic name of the inhabitants of the Dean valley.
Suxwulk: Village on Dean Channel below Kimsquit.
Swatku: One of the first men to settle on the Kimsquit River in the beginning of time.
Swaky: Mountain at Kimsquit which was in human form in the beginning of time.
swalitxwulmut: Meeting of the senior supernatural beings to discuss ceremonial matters at the winter solstice.
swalsta: Provender provided by the supreme god for the first settlers in the beginning of time.
swa'xmu: Mud.
sxaista: Person or object which is taboo.
Sxaixaxwus: Evil supernatural being.
Sxaldzuu, "Maker of Good Weather": Supernatural name of dog salmon.
sxêkmem gêi mûsi: Term of opprobrium applied to a child whose father drove away his mother.
sxêkste: Sorcerer's box.
Sxe-luxwuta-a: Part of a peculiar repository.
sxên: Female lover, especially a paramour.
sxêuus: Male lover.
Sxqle-ti: One of the first women to settle on the upper Kimsquit River in the beginning of time.
sxwu: The bursting forth of light.
[785] *sxwtsta:* Ceremonial chastity.
[831] *sxwtsudjut:* The state of practising ceremonial chastity.
sxwtsunai: Power engendered by ceremonial chastity.
sqak: 1—Sorcerer.
2—*Kwakiut* name of a Bella Coola man.
Sqakqâ'yuta-a: Part of a peculiar repository.
sxim: Cedar-bark cord.
Szimsina: One of the first women to settle on the Kimsquit River in the beginning of time.
Szimszimuk: Immoral supernatural woman.
szlê': Afterbirth.
Szlyuta-a: Chief of the dogs in the beginning of time.
[838] *Szputs:* 1—Hermaphrodite, a supernatural being.
[761] 2—Man who performs woman's work.
szumtumots klê': Life, one of the supernatural elements in the human body.
[821] *Szûlî'kut,* South Wind: A supernatural being.
[805] *Szûlû,* "Angry Moon": First moon after the winter solstice.
szû-a': Poisonous supernatural creature that travels with the War-Party of the Tides.
szûmuk: "The Left Side," in the language of ghosts. The word has two meanings:
[532] 1—Carved human figure set up by a shaman near the vessel of grease which is thrown on a fire.
2—Nickname bestowed on a man.

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Xemlaix: One of the first men to settle at *Xenqo'o* in the beginning of time.
Xemtem: *Kuxlut* name of a *Skhkiat* man.
Xemxemkhetla: 1—One of the nine supernatural siblings.
2—Ancestral name of a Bella Coola man.
Xemxemlaix: *Xuxut* name brought from above in the beginning of time.
Xemxemtem: 1—Supernatural beings who request the sun to appear.
[533] 2—One of the first men to settle at *Skqaltal* in the beginning of time.
xetla: Boastful type of song used by chiefs in war expeditions and at potlatches.
Xetlibs: One of the first men to settle at *Xuthnalx* in the beginning of time.
Xeltxe: *Kuxlut* name of a Kimsquit woman. The designation is of Bella Bella origin.
[825] *xgus:* Marten.
[412] *xil:* Stone axe.
xilmk: Party of potlatch messengers and the invitation they bear.
[203] *Ximpdimut:* Man mentioned in an ancient story.
Ximsmalaix: *A'alk* man mentioned in an ancient story.
Ximsmxelaix: Celebrated female shaman.
[821] *qmqmtsi-i, plural, qmqmtsitsk:* Little girl.
[517] *Xmqmus:* 1—"Little Girls": Group of stars in the Great Bear.
2—Picnic, especially one on which fern root is gathered.
Xnaix: Bella Coola term for the Carriers living near Ootsa Lake. This is said to be their own name for themselves.
Xnimdu-a, "Right Foot": *Stuxz* repository named from part of a supernatural creature.
Xqoix: Mountain in the Carrier country.
nemtmus: Spirit, one of the supernatural elements in the human body.
sklutum: Ceremony prior to a potlatch when tasks are allotted and the donor's house destroyed.
sklul: The entrusting, before death, of a name for the benefit of a relative.
[586] *Xlilmuls:* Mountain in the upper Bella Coola valley.
[825] *skukwimut:* The irrevocable desertion of her husband by a wife.
Xmuut: Locality below *Nuxqalz.*
[601] *qmqmus:* Minnows.
[614] *qmus:* Woman, or wife in indirect address (*ki qmulaix:* My wife).
[423] *qmutsus:* Female relatives of same ancestral family, term of indirect address.
qmuxlem or nuqmuxlem: The right by which a husband uses his wife's land, though it is not his own.
Xnulk: Bella Coola sorcerer living in the last century.
sukdt: The forcible washing of a Cannibal.
Xulxwaxaw: Name acquired by a man mentioned in an ancient story.
[785] *sukkjut:* Intercourse held during ceremonial chastity; the term has a sacred significance.
[891] *Xumtsk:* Male professional singer who came down to the Dean River in the beginning of time.
Xumxemqs: Ancestral name of a *Stuxz* man. The designation is said to have come from Smith Inlet.
Xuqmtem: Supernatural scoop-net fisherman, servant of the supreme god.
Xquxlk: Bella Coola man mentioned in an ancient story.